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C.I.A. Papers Said to Show Domestic Spying Traces to the 1950's

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WASHINGTON, July 15—The monitoring and infiltration of domestic political organizations by the Central Intelligence Agency was both broader and of far longer duration than disclosed by the Rockefeller Commission, according to newly released C.I.A. documents.

The agency's Office of Security, the documents show, began to collect and file information on the activities of the Socialist Workers party in 1950, nearly 20 years before the inception of Operation Chaos, the domestic C.I.A. surveillance effort that was termed unlawful by the commission in its report last month.

The papers, which were obtained by the party, in connection with a lawsuit against the Government, also show that the agency's security staff continued to infiltrate the party's units in the Washington area at least two years beyond the 1968 date given in the commission's report for the termination of such activity.

Political Roots Sought

As early as 1951 the papers were said to show that the Office of Security, which is charged with maintaining the loyalty of C.I.A. employes and activities, began to insert its [illegible] on the Socialist Workers Party, background material on the group's political origins and the number of votes polled by Farrell Dobbs, the party's candidate for President in 1952. Literature handed out by the Young Socialist Alliance, [illegible] party affiliate, [illegible] was gathered by C.I.A. operatives at Columbia University in 1961 and at the University of California at Berkeley in 1962 and forwarded to the agency's headquarters.

On another occasion, in 1961, the agency's Boston field office filed a report on a young Socialist Alliance rally at Harvard held to protest the killing of Patrice Lumumba, the Congolese leader.

The report was said to have included copies of leaflets passed out by the demonstrators and photographs of the event that appeared in the Harvard Crimson.

Commission Gave No Word

The Rockefeller Commission, set up last January by President Ford to look into the domestic activities of the C.I.A. gave no indication that monitoring of domestic political groups by the agency began before the middle nineteen-sixties, when Operation Chaos and related programs were set up.

The commission reported, for example, that the Office of Security had begun in 1966 to prepare "several studies relating to dissidents and dissident groups" in the United States, and had accumulated large numbers of newspaper articles and other materials on which to base its reports.

The commission criticized the hundreds of resulting files on domestic organization as having exceeded in scope "what was required by the agency's legitimate security needs" to insure the safety of its facilities.

But the commission failed to point out that, as is clear from the scores of photocopied newspaper clippings made available under the lawsuit, that refer to the Socialist Workers Party, the Office of Security [illegible] information [illegible] as 1951, barely three years after the agency's [illegible].

According to the commission's report Operation Chaos, established in 1967 to search for signs of foreign influence within the movement against the Vietnam war in the United States, was a part of the agency's counterintelligence staff and thus bore no relation to the Office of Security.

Not in Colby Description

However, when William E. Colby, the Director of Central dent Ford last Dec. 24 responding to published accounts of illegal domestic activities by his agency, he described Operation Chaos, but did not mention the gathering and collection of information on domestic groups by the Office of Security.

Whenever the C.I.A. had, in the past, come across information relating to "the internal security of the United States," Mr. Colby wrote, it had been "passed to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other departments or agencies of the Government when appropriate."

The National Security Act of 1947, often referred to as the agency's "charter," stipulates that the C.I.A. shall have no "police, subpoena, law-enforcement powers, or internal security functions."

In response to a set of questions tendered by the Government to the party in connection with its lawsuit, the Socialist Workers party asserted that it was a domestic organization, was devoted to running candidates for public office rather than to violent revolution, and had no ties to any international Communist movement.

"Investigation within the United States of [illegible] political organizations, whether or not they are 'violent' or have foreign connections, nevertheless falls within the jurisdiction of the F.B.I., the Federal agency responsible for domestic counterespionage.

$27-Million Is Asked

The party's lawsuit, which has already produced hundreds of documents relating to the counterintelligence efforts directed against it by the F.B.I., is seeking $27-million in damages on the ground that its lawful political activities were "illegally" harassed and disrupted by Federal intelligence agencies.

Vice President Rockefeller also criticized as "far beyond steps necessary to protect the agency's own facilities" an effort by the Office of Security to infiltrate operatives into radical groups in the Washington area.

The intent of the program, which the commission said began in 1967, was to provide the C.I.A. with advance notice of demonstrations that might be aimed at the C.I.A.'s headquarters in Virginia or one of its numerous other offices in and around Washington.